The following Circular of the Government of Bombay is republished :—

General Department, No. 5616, dated 11th November 1910.

CIRCULAR.

The Haj Committee of Bombay, which consists of a number of Muhammadan gentlemen of the city, have recently brought to the notice of the Government of Bombay that large numbers of pilgrims start on their journey to Mecca with money just sufficient to enable them to reach that place, trusting to obtain sufficient charitable assistance for the return journey. On their return many reach Bombay, but have no money to meet the expense of the further journey to their homes in the interior of India or elsewhere. The Committee recommend that the pilgrims should be enjoined either to purchase return railway tickets or to deposit with the Protector of Pilgrims, Bombay, sufficient money to cover the return railway fare before embarkation. His Excellency in Council is in cordial sympathy with the object of this recommendation since the adoption of either of the courses suggested would prevent much avoidable suffering to returning Hajis.

2. His Excellency in Council considers, however, that intending pilgrims may well be reminded of the precepts of the Koran on the subject, more especially of those which enjoined that sufficient provision should be made for the journey. He accordingly desires to draw the attention of all Muhammadans to the following extracts from the Koran and other authoritative works dealing with the Haj, so that all may understand what the great teachers of Islam have laid down :—.

I. *Koran Chapter II* (Sale) lays down : " Make provision (for your journey) but the best provision is piety : and fear me, O ye of understanding." The reason for this verse, is given in Sahi Bukhari, Volume VI, Chapter 1410, and in *tradition No. 736, Mishkat, Volume II*, to the following effect :—

The son of Abbas says that the people of Yemen used to go on the Haj without providing sufficient food for their journey, declaring that they placed reliance upon God, and after reaching Mecca used to beg. Therefore, God sent down this verse (from heaven).

II. *Koran Chapter III* (Sale) : " And it is a duty towards God (incumbent) on those who are *able* to go thither to visit this house." Foot note in Sale's translation " According to an exposition of this passage attributed to Muhammad, he is supposed to be able to perform the pilgrimage who can supply himself with provisions for the journey and a beast to ride upon. Al Safai has decided that those who have money enough, if they cannot go themselves, must hire some other to go in their room. Malek Ebu Aus thinks he is to be reckoned *able* who is strong and healthy, and can bear the fatigue of the journey on foot, if he has no beast to ride, and can also earn his living by the way. But Abu Hanifa is of opinion that both *money sufficient* and *health of body* are requisite to make the pilgrimage a duty."

Tradition No. 730, Mishkat Volume II : " Another man asked ' O messenger of God, what should be provided for the journey.' He replied ' sufficient food and conveyance.' "

Tradition No. 729 : " The son of Umer says that one came unto the prophet—may peace be upon him—and asked him ' O messenger of God, what makes the Haj Obligatory ? ' He replied that (it is obligatory upon him) who has sufficient for the expenses of the journey and conveyance."

3. In addition to the above, the *Nurul Hidaya* (Book of the Haj), recognised by the Hanafis, and the *Matalud Minh Shafai*, recognised by the Shafais, both lay down that a pilgrim must have sufficient funds for the journey.

4. It is clear from the destitution prevailing amongst return Hajis that sufficient heed has not been given to these wise commands by pious pilgrims. Much hardship and suffering are thus endured every year, while the increasing number of indigent pilgrims imposes a burden now becoming intolerable on the responsible authorities who have to find the requisite funds for their repatriation. His Excellency in Council, while thus bringing to notice the injunctions of Islam on the subject of the Haj and the hardship and suffering entailed by their neglect, desires to disclaim any intention of interfering with this great religious journey. Beyond the sanitary precautions rendered necessary by international agreement, which moreover are highly desirable in the interests of the health of the pilgrims themselves, it is not intended by these orders to place any restrictions on pious Muhammadans desiring to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca. The object in view is to remind intending pilgrims that sufficient provision for the journey has been laid down in the Koran, in the traditions of the prophet and by the great interpreters of Islam as obligatory on all intending pilgrims.

5. It would ensure the safe return of outgoing pilgrims to their homes if, as recommended by the Haj Committee, outgoing pilgrims obtained return railway tickets or deposited with the Commissioner of Police, Bombay, through the Protector of Pilgrims, an amount sufficient to cover the expenses of the journey from Bombay to their homes before embarkation at Bombay.

By Order,

C. S. BALASUNDARAM IYER,
Officiating Secretary to Government,
General and Revenue Departments.